



The
Science
of
Revolution

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Introduction

The Revolutionary Communist Party has put forward the analysis that the decade of the 1980s holds the very real possibility of a revolutionary situation developing right here in the U.S.A. Based on a *scientific* summation of the crisis faced by the imperialists, the world war they are driven to and are preparing, the upheaval in store for this society, and the drastic changes this will bring about in the willingness of the slaves to tolerate one more intolerable day of slavery—we look forward to the great opportunities for revolutionary advances in the period ahead.

But revolutionary victory will not come easily or automatically. Burning anger and a desire to make revolution are not enough. What is called for is not only a commitment to fight, but the struggle to fight *consciously*—to learn and master and apply the science of revolution—Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought. That is what this pamphlet is about.

Society's development is not something random and unknowable or uncontrollable. Like nature, it has understandable laws to its motion. Society itself is nothing more than a highly organized form of nature—an organized struggle of people with nature for necessities needed to survive. Once the internal laws governing its motion are understood, they can be consciously applied by people to change the world. Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought is the science of class struggle—the key weapon of the party of the proletariat.

This pamphlet has been written to arm the millions now awakening to political life with this science of revolution. It is a reprint of a series of articles which appeared recently in the pages of the *Revolutionary Worker* newspaper, a series which summed up and served as an introduction to an important new book to be published soon, *The Science of Revolution* (RCP Publications). This book will very sharply and thoroughly explain the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought and the line of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA. This pamphlet serves as a very basic introduction to the profound revolutionary lessons summed up in the book. As Lenin said, "Without revolutionary theory, there *can be no* revolutionary movement." The difference is that between fighting blindly or fighting consciously with your head up. The difference is that between random sparks of struggle or using a blowtorch to destroy the chains that bind us.

May, 1980

The Philosophy to Change the World

"In class society everyone lives as a member of a particular class, and every kind of thinking, without exception, is stamped with the brand of a class." This basic truth, sharply stated by Mao Tsetung in his article "On Practice," particularly applies to philosophy.

Different classes have always promoted different philosophies reflecting their respective class interests. Philosophies are concentrated, systematic ways of understanding the world. They are neither impossible to understand nor a pointless pursuit, but are a crucial arena of class struggle. Without a correct philosophy, no revolutionary movement in this epoch can hope to persevere through to victory. Instead it will be lost and disoriented in the storms and turmoil, whipped from pillar to post like a ship without a compass.

Today the capitalist class everywhere promotes the philosophical outlook that serves capitalism and promotes its principles as eternal. The U.S. ruling class for instance, pushes *pragmatism*—a philosophy formulated in opposition to Marxism that denies humanity's ability to know the *essence* of the world, and makes the truth of an idea depend on whether it enables the bourgeoisie to tinker with and adjust what already exists, namely, capitalism.

This, and other bourgeois philosophies, serve the capitalists, not only by directly influencing those who study them, but also by filtering down to influence the thinking and actions of the broad masses, whether they are aware of that influence or not. The proletariat's weapon on this philosophical battlefield is *dialectical materialism*. Dialectical materialism reveals to the proletariat its real place in society and arms it with the methods and outlook it needs to change it.

Dialectical materialism alone of all philosophies not only admits to but proudly upholds its class standpoint, while at the same time insisting on its quality of being universally true. All other philosophy ultimately serves exploiting minority classes and strives to cloak that service to exploitation in the myth of philosophy that is "above classes"—all the while whitewashing the division of society into classes! Since dialectical materialism represents the proletariat which needs to end exploitation, it has no interest in lying about or covering up society's division into classes. Thus because of the nature of the class which it represents, Marxist philosophy is both true and partisan.

Dialectical materialism differs in one other essential—it openly avows that the only reason for people to study philosophy and understand the world is in order to *change* it. Today that can only mean making revolution to overthrow capitalism. As Marx wrote, "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it."

The Materialist Conception of History

Marx and Engels were revolutionary students active in the political storms that swept Europe in the 1830s and '40s. To find a way forward they studied philosophy, science and history and through much struggle and investigation developed dialectical materialism. Immediately they set about applying this philosophy to human society in order to advance the revolutionary struggle.

A basic discovery made by Marx and Engels was that the ideas and institutions of an age stem from the economic relations that people enter into with each other in carrying out production—the *class* relations of society. These relations in turn are ultimately determined by the level of development of the productive forces, which people do not choose for themselves but inherit from the previous generation and then develop. The productive forces include the laboring peoples themselves and their skills and knowledge, as well as the instruments of production and technology, raw materials, etc. The productive forces are not only the basic foundation of all society, they are also its most revolutionary element. Since people are always developing new technique and raising production to ever-higher levels, the productive forces constantly change beneath the framework of the class relations (known as the *economic base*) and the political and ideological forms (or *superstructure*) arising on that base.

These contradictions—between the forces of production and relations of production, and between the economic base and the superstructure—take the form of *class struggle*. The carrying through and resolution of this struggle through revolution has been responsible for the development of class society, from the earliest slavery up through today, where humanity stands on the threshold of wiping out all forms of slavery and class divisions forever.

The relatively rapidly developing forces of production soon strain against the relations that originally arose to serve the old level of development. Classes that embody the more advanced relations corresponding to the more highly developed productive forces clash with the classes representing and bound up with old relations. This conflict in turn gives rise to tremendous struggle in the superstructure, with the new and rising class attempting to smash the old superstructure and replace it with one that will protect and serve *its* economic base.

Let's apply that to modern society. Capitalism differs from every previous system in that production is mainly carried out by people working together co-operatively, and not by individuals working alone. That is, productive forces are for the first time in the main *socialized*. But production relations are stuck in the era of individual production and ownership. Thousands labor in factories, producing wealth beyond the wildest dreams of people 200 or even 100 years ago—and yet that collective product at day's end is taken by a few individuals who may never have even seen the factory or the people who slave there!

On one hand, socialized production carried out by the proletariat. On the other, private ownership in the hands of the capitalists. *This* is the fundamental contradiction of the epoch. And until the proletariat, embodying and representing the more advanced socialized relations that correspond to the socialized productive forces, resolves this contradiction by totally eliminating the bourgeoisie and all traces of capitalist relations, class struggle will rage between the two.

This class struggle must lead ~~the~~ the proletarian revolution and then the dictatorship of the proletariat to resolve the contradiction. But proletarian dictatorship itself is only transitional to something still higher—communism. The proletariat uses its power to hold down and keep down the old exploiters and beyond that to continually overthrow new exploiters that base themselves on the vestiges of inequalities and backwardness characteristic of societies ruled by exploiting classes. In waging those struggles the proletariat must simultaneously "dig up the soil" from which the new exploiters grow.

Communism—the *goal* of the proletariat's struggle—will open up a whole new era in human history; in fact, as Marx and Engels put it, communism will represent in a fundamental sense the real *beginning* of human history, to which the previous centuries of human existence, including the thousands of years of the division of society into classes, will serve only as a primitive prologue.

Thus the bourgeoisie's fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable. This is the essential truth revealed by historical materialism, and that is why the bourgeoisie hates and suppresses it and why the proletariat cherishes and applies it, and enriches it in the process.

Materialism

Historical materialism is the application of dialectical materialism to society and history. But both dialectics and materialism demand study in their own right.

Materialism developed in struggle against an opposing philosophical camp, idealism. Idealism generally presents the physical world as the creation of spirit, and in one form or another invents a supernatural, all-knowing but unknowable, spirit as the source of creation. Truth then is not to be sought in the material world but in the spiritual one. Man's ideas, his values and his "nature" supposedly exist independently of, and even are said to form the basis for, his material existence as a member of a particular class in a particular society. And these ideas, values, "nature," etc. are seen as the product of some force external to and higher than humanity and human society. This is idealism.

Directly opposed to idealism is materialism, based on the recognition that the world, indeed the whole universe, all of existence, is only different forms of matter, animated not by some unknowable spirit but by their innate physical properties. "The materialist world outlook," wrote Engels, "is simply the conception of nature as it is, without any reservations."

The raw material for consciousness is people's experience in the material world. Ideas of beauty, truth, virtue and so on are conditioned by social experience in class society. Materialists, in contrast to the popular definition, are not hedonists or gluttons, unconcerned with the loftier things of life—it is exactly the opposite! Marxist materialists possess high ideals indeed—and not only possess them, but struggle to realize them by transforming the material world in accordance with the forward motion of history.

Free Will?

But what of free will, objects the bourgeoisie. "By ascribing people's actions and thinking to class relations," they cry, "you eliminate free choice and free will."

But this sacred free choice and free will touted by the bourgeois philosophers turn out to exist within very narrow limits indeed.

A worker might like to console himself that he has freely chosen to work for the boss that exploits him—but he certainly had no hand in choosing the class relations of the society he was born in. And those class relations determine that, choose as one might, you will always be free to choose only between masters—though when unemployment goes up, we find yet another freedom: the freedom to starve!

Dialectical materialism does *not* deny freedom. It grasps, instead, that freedom only has meaning in relation to its opposite, *necessity*, that is, to the actual limits of a given situation and the laws governing it; and further that the entire point of understanding reality is to then be able to transform it.

For instance, the proletariat may wish that classes could be abolished overnight, and on seizing power "choose" to abolish the state. But since the bourgeoisie still exists and for a long time will be constantly engendered after the revolution, such a choice would allow forces working to restore capitalism to re-group and take back power, and our supposed free choice would have got us exactly the opposite result from the one we wanted. By grasping the laws governing the class struggle during and after the revolution—and in fact discovering them through engaging in revolutionary struggle and using materialist dialectics to constantly sum up that experience—communists have been able to understand that the ongoing class struggle demands a transition period of proletarian dictatorship to lay the basis to eventually abolish all classes and forms of government, and on the basis of that understanding, carry out the revolutionary practice that will step by step transform reality towards that goal.

Mao Tsetung formulated this principle as being that "matter can be transformed into consciousness and consciousness into matter." That is, by all-sidedly and correctly summing up the material world and developing correct theories and policies on that basis, those theories can then be used to transform and change the world. Materialism reveals the real links between matter and consciousness and in doing so allows the greatest scope for consciousness of any philosophy.

Marxism not only opposes the idealists who deny that consciousness grows out of matter and in fact also deny the need for ideas to, in turn, be based on the material world; it also does battle with "vulgar (undialectical) materialists," who downplay the role of consciousness, passively trailing along in the wake of events. Each of the great Marxists has had to fight this perversion of materialism and uphold the dynamic role of consciousness. Speaking particularly of Mao Tsetung, Comrade Bob Avakian said that

"For this, of course, the bourgeoisie, the revisionists and opportunists of all stripes, inside and outside China, have labeled Mao an 'idealist'. But Mao was a thoroughgoing materialist. He based himself on the real world, *in its process of constant motion and change, from the lower to the higher, on the inevitable supersession of the old by the new*. Because of this he never lost sight of but continually grasped the link between the present and the future, the existence of elements of the future within the present, and the fact that the struggle of the proletariat world-wide against the bourgeoisie and all reaction would eventually and inexorably, despite twists and turns and temporary reversals and setbacks, advance mankind to the historic goal of communism, which itself would be propelled forward by contradiction and struggle." (Mao Tsetung's *Immortal Contributions*, p. 324)

To sum up: idealism promotes an upside down view of the world where

consciousness in one form or another comes before and is the source of the matter that in reality produces it; where men's ideas come before or are created independently of, or even are the source of, the social conditions that actually create them; and where, for all the fine talk of free will, people cannot change the world on their own but must trust their fate to a "higher being".

The materialist outlook seeks truth in the material world, understands people's ideas as the products of their social experience, and by more deeply grasping the laws of the material world and especially society, seeks to change the world and the people in it.

Dialectics vs. Metaphysics

But if all the world is different forms of matter, how then are we to understand these different forms in their motion and development? This question leads to an even more fundamental philosophical struggle between the metaphysical and dialectical world outlooks.

The metaphysical outlook, as Mao explained, views things

"as isolated, static and one-sided. It regards all things in the universe, their forms and their species, as eternally isolated from one another and immutable. Such change as there is can only be an increase or decrease in quantity or a change of place. Moreover, the cause of such an increase or decrease or change of place is not inside things but outside them, that is, the motive force is external." (*On Contradiction*)

The metaphysical outlook sees rest or stability as the natural order of things and change as unusual. Development then is simple adding on—not a process of the new struggling against and finally conquering and replacing the old.

In opposition to metaphysics, Mao Tsetung summed up dialectics in this way

"... the world outlook of materialist dialectics holds that in order to understand the development of a thing we should study it internally and in its relations with other things; in other words, the development of things should be seen as their internal and necessary self-movement, while each thing in its movement is interrelated with and interacts on the things around it." (*ibid.*)

The cause of all change and development is the *contradictions* within things—that is, a unity of opposites that both coexist with and struggle against each other. This is the fundamental law of the universe.

In everyday language, "contradiction" is generally used to mean something stands in contrast to the way things are supposed to, or appear to be—to contradict an argument is to show up the inconsistencies in it. A

"contradiction in terms" implies that two different qualities cannot coexist within the same thing, or that something cannot contain both its characteristic quality and its opposite at once.

The dialectical use of the term "contradiction" is more profound and true. A contradiction is the simultaneous coexistence and struggle of opposite forces within a process or thing; this determines its—temporary—existence and its motion and development, and its subsequent non-existence. A living being is certainly alive, but does it not contain also elements of death? Don't cells within it die and doesn't it constantly struggle to get rid of these dead cells within it, doesn't it transform non-living matter (food, oxygen) into life, and doesn't it eventually die when the struggles within it cease, when death wins out over life within it?

Let's look at some other examples. War is certainly different than peace; but it is the contradictory forces that coexist in peacetime whose struggle eventually intensifies and transforms itself into war. The "peaceful" competition for markets, the cutthroat power plays to ensure (or disrupt) the *status quo*, the feverish arming of the great powers—don't all these exist in peace time, aren't they characteristic of peace, and yet don't they at the same time constitute elements of war within peace? The same is also true of just wars of oppressed classes and nations for their liberation—which develop as a qualitative leap out of the "peaceful" struggle of the oppressed against their oppressors.

Mao popularly expressed this principle as "one divides into two"—meaning that everything exists and develops through the struggle between its two contradictory aspects. Within society progress results from the struggle between two opposing classes, within the Party from the struggle between right and wrong ideas characteristic of those different classes. This goes right down to the atom in nature, which can be broken into the struggle and unity of its electrons and protons, which in turn are further divisible, and on and on.

"The interdependence of the contradictory aspects present in all things," wrote Mao, "and the struggle between these aspects determine the life of all things and push their development forward. There is nothing that does not contain contradiction; without contradiction nothing would exist."

Development Through Leaps

The two contradictory aspects of a process or entity do not struggle indefinitely. At a certain point a leap in development occurs—that is, through the struggle and transformation of opposites a totally new process comes into being. Thus development is not circular but spiral-like, going to ever higher levels through the course of twists and turns, advances and setbacks, which finally lead to leaps to a whole new stage.

This concept of development through qualitative leaps goes against the "vulgar evolutionists" who acknowledge change but portray it as smooth, without breaks, leaps or revolutions.

Take the birth of a baby, for example. An embryo is created by the union of opposites, the sperm and ovum. But this embryo immediately begins dividing, adding on cells developing into a fetus. For the rest of the gestation period this fetus exists as one kind of thing, with its own particular contradictions and processes, even as it is growing quantitatively and developing into something different. At the moment of birth, the old unity of opposites is shattered, one divides into two, the fetus goes out of existence, the afterbirth is discarded and something *qualitatively* new comes into being—an independent baby.

The Spiral Development of the Proletarian Revolution

Only the dialectical notion of spiral and not circular development can reveal the real motion of history, in particular proletarian revolution and the transition to classless, communist society. The proletariat has made three landmark attempts at transforming society—the Paris Commune of 1871, the Russian Revolution and the Chinese Revolution. Each of these attempts, however, was eventually temporarily defeated by the bourgeoisie and capitalism was restored.

This, in a sweeping way, has been the history of proletarian revolution so far—but only so far, for it represents really only the early history of this process, only the first attempts, however monumental, at overthrowing and moving towards the elimination of capitalism, attempts which have in themselves ended in setback.

Thus we see what seems a cycle of revolution-restoration-revolution-restoration, and the metaphysician asks what all the sacrifice really accomplished.

This was spoken to in the book *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, by the RCP, which analyzed the betrayal of the revolution in China.

“And it must be frankly admitted that the working class has not been able to hold onto power for an extended period of time. But the international working class is not at point-0. It is not as though history simply repeats itself. The working class movement has advanced to a higher level through the experience of making revolution, learning from past experiences, summing up new conditions and charting out a clearer path forward. It was only a little more than 100 years ago that the working class first rose up in an organized way and established the first workers’ government, the Paris Commune. It was short-lived, but it put the question of workers’ rule on the front burner. The problem of seizing power and consolidating the rule of the working class was resolved through the experience of the Bolshevik revolution. And with the Chinese revolution, the problem posed by the Soviet experience, how to mobilize the masses to prevent restoration, was theoretically and practically resolved through the Cultural Revolution.

“But each of these resolutions brought forth new contradictions and

difficulties which will be resolved through the world-wide experience of the proletarian revolution. For this reason, though the working class held power in China for a shorter time than in the Soviet Union, its ability to push past the contradictions posed by the Bolshevik revolution has brought the working class movement to a higher level. Mao Tsetung Thought concentrates these experiences and lessons of class struggle and will make it possible for the working class to advance even further.”

An introductory article of this length can only touch on a few of the essential points of dialectics, and readers are urged to go into the readings listed at the end, especially “On Contradiction” by Mao.

Development of Marxist Philosophy

As touched on earlier, Marx and Engels’ earlier discovery of dialectical materialism, and its application to human society, historical materialism, was truly a world-historic breakthrough. But these foundations of Marxism have had to be continuously defended and further developed. Society and nature ceaselessly develop, and new challenges constantly arise.

Lenin further defended and deepened Marxist philosophy, particularly around the question of materialism vs. idealism, especially in the forms the latter took in the late 19th century—empirio-criticism, positivism, and pragmatism. Lenin’s defense of Marxist philosophy was closely linked to the battle against revisionism, and the firm scientific foundations forged in it enabled Lenin and the Bolsheviks to stand firm in the storms that inevitably would and did come while others who had fallen for the myth that “capitalism works” cut and ran like cowards. Lenin also developed dialectics, insisting on the unity and struggle of opposites as the most important law of dialectics. But it remained for Mao Tsetung to develop this point of Lenin’s, and in doing so, to raise the understanding of dialectics to a whole new level.

Mao’s landmark work “On Contradiction” directed its fire against the dogmatists who were choking the life out of the Chinese Communist Party. Dogmatism characteristically considers only one aspect of a contradiction, or absolutely separates the two aspects (as well as generally divorcing theory from practice). Mao insisted on grasping both the unity and the struggle between opposites as key to a vital understanding of things in their motion and development, and from this starting point forged a number of important concepts of dialectics.

Mao’s dialectics was crucial to his greatest overall contribution to Marxism-Leninism: the discovery of the class struggle as the main contradiction in socialism, and the character of and basis for that struggle. Without thoroughly grasping that opposites both struggle and coexist simultaneously, and transform themselves into each other in the proper conditions, how could it be understood that a bourgeoisie continues to

coexist and struggle with the proletariat under socialism? Without understanding this, how could the proletariat be armed to win? This brings home again with full force that grasping and applying philosophy is indeed not an "interesting side pursuit," but an absolute necessity to the revolutionary proletariat to successfully carry through its struggle.

The Proletariat Must Grasp Materialist Dialectics

The proletariat can only make revolution, transform society and emancipate itself and all mankind in the process if it masters, grasps and applies materialist dialectics.

Dialectical materialism enables the proletariat to finally penetrate to the *essence* of capitalism: to see it, as Marx put it, as only a "particular historical phase," and to understand what inevitably must replace it. In a word, it reveals to the working class its historic mission.

Further, dialectical materialism enables the working class to analyze society and solve the strategic and tactical problems facing it in making revolution, and in continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. And finally, by fully grasping and developing dialectical materialism mankind will not only advance out of the phase of class society and make the qualitative leap into communist society—it will continue to battle even then, not against antagonistic exploitative classes, but in the struggle to master nature and the dialectically related struggle against the outmoded relations, institutions and ideas that will still have to be defeated for society's advance even under communism.

Some suggested readings on philosophy:

Engels, Socialism: Utopian and Scientific

Mao Tsetung, On Contradiction

Lenin, Materialism and Empirio-Criticism, Chapter I, sections 4, 5, 6; Chapter II, sections 1 and 2; Chapter III, section 6; Chapter V, sections 2 and 3.

Bob Avakian, Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions, Chapter 4, "Philosophy."

Capitalism's Dirty Little Secret

"Having recognized that the economic system is the foundation on which the political superstructure is erected, Marx devoted his greatest attention to the study of this economic system. Marx's principal work, *Capital*, is devoted to a study of the economic system of modern, i.e. capitalist society . . ." (Lenin, "Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism")

To study capitalism and thus analyze how to fight and overthrow it, Marx began with the kernel of capitalist production: the *commodity*. What then is a commodity? And what is commodity production?

Commodity production is production for exchange, for sale in the market place. If I grew vegetables in my yard, and ate them all myself, I have produced *use-values*, things that are useful—but this is not yet commodity production. If however, I *sell* my vegetables to my neighbors so that I may buy something else, I have produced not only use-value but *exchange value* as well—the value for which I can sell my vegetables. This production for exchange is commodity production.

Every commodity contains a basic contradiction. It must have use-value, for if it isn't useful no one would buy it. But it also has exchange-value—that is, it exchanges at *definite rates* with other commodities. For instance, two loaves of bread are worth about as much as a gallon of gas.

But how is this exchange-value determined? If commodities can be exchanged at definite rates they must have something in common. Is it their use-value? Obviously not—we cannot compare the usefulness of gasoline and bread, since they are qualitatively different and cannot be equated the one to the other. Marx pointed out that, "If then we leave out of consideration the use-value of commodities, they have only one common property

left, that of being products of labour." (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 38) It is the labor necessary for the production of a commodity that determines its value in exchange.

We are not speaking here of individual labor time: a baker who is so slow that he takes twice as long to make a loaf of bread as his competitor can hardly sell it for twice the price! It is the *average socially necessary labor time*—the labor time "required to produce an article under the normal conditions of production, and with the average degree of skill and intensity prevalent at the time" that determines the exchange value of a commodity. (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 39)

But what about the law of supply and demand—that is, the idea that the relative scarcity or availability of a commodity determines its value? While supply and demand *influences* the proportions in which commodities exchange, it's still the amount of labor time concentrated in a commodity—its value—which determines the general area within which the price of something varies.

For example, while Chrysler has more cars than it could even store, let alone sell, and has lowered prices through rebates, etc., there is a certain rock bottom below which they do not and cannot go even though the cars continue to rust on the lots. On the other hand, a few years ago when CB radios were the hottest thing around and you had to wait several months to get one, the price never went above a certain top limit. And no matter how much in demand or how available either commodity was, Chryslers still generally sold at 50 times the price of a good CB.

Anarchy of Capitalist Production

The capitalist ruling class often likes to yell about "anarchists"—and tar revolutionaries with that brush. But in fact these capitalists and their system are the real anarchists. Commodity production gives rise to a situation in which no single commodity producer knows "whether his individual product will meet an actual demand, whether he will be able to make good his costs of production or even to sell his commodity at all. *Anarchy reigns in socialized production.*" (Engels, *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, emphasis added)

This anarchy of production is intensified with the growth of capitalism, which transforms everything into commodities, and thereby subjects the entire process of social production to the blind operation of the law of value. Production is not carried out according to a plan for the overall development of society, but rather commodities are blindly and frenetically thrown onto the market with but one criterion—the drive of the capitalist to accumulate ever more capital.

Capitalism transforms not only the products of labor but human labor power itself into a commodity. Labor power—the ability to work—is bought and sold on the market as readily as gasoline or bread.

Marx analyzed this fundamental social relation of capitalism in *Wage-Labor and Capital*:

"Labor power is, therefore, a commodity which its possessor, the wage-worker, sells to capital. Why does he sell it? In order to live.

"But the exercise of labor power, labor, is the worker's own life activity, the manifestation of his own life. And this *life activity* he sells to another person in order to secure the necessary *means of subsistence*. Thus his life-activity is for him only a means to enable him to exist. He works in order to live. He does not even reckon labor as part of his life, it is rather a sacrifice of his life. It is a commodity which he has made over to another. Hence, also, the product of his activity is not the object of his activity. What he produces for himself is not the silk that he weaves, not the gold that he draws from the mines, not the palace that he builds. What he produces for himself is *wages*, and silk, gold, palace resolve themselves for him into a definite quantity of the means of subsistence, perhaps into a cotton jacket, some copper coins and a lodging in the cellar . . ."

Surplus Value: The Secret of Capitalist Exploitation

The source of the capitalist's wealth does not lie mainly in slick wheeling and dealing. The source of capitalist wealth lies in exploiting the one commodity he finds on the market—labor power—which is "a source not only of value, but of more value than it has itself." (*Capital*)

How can there be such a commodity?

Labor is work. It creates all exchange value. The capitalist will maintain he is paying the worker for his labor. But he is not. What the capitalist buys from the worker is not labor, but *labor power*, the ability to work. And like every other commodity, the value of labor power is determined by the labor time necessary to produce it; that is, by the value of the clothing, food, shelter, etc. necessary to maintain the worker and allow him or her to raise a new generation of workers. The value of labor power is determined not only by the minimum requirements of physical existence, but also by social requirements (which may vary).

Once the capitalist has bought a day's labor power, this labor power belongs to him. The workers may produce enough value in four hours, or even less, to cover the cost of his wages for the day. But this doesn't stop the capitalist working "his" worker for a full eight hours or more! After all, remember, he is not paying the worker for what he produces but merely paying him enough to keep him producing for the day. The difference between the two is *surplus value*, which the capitalist appropriates as his profit.

Take a typical example. The capitalist buys means of production, machinery and raw materials (which Marx calls *constant capital*). This capital is merely transferred to the finished product, either all at once or bit by bit, depending on the nature of the particular element of produc-

tion. Suppose that a clothing manufacturer's cost for cotton and wear and tear on machinery during one day's work by his worker has a labor-time value of twelve hours of work. Since money represents value, suppose one hour's labor time is represented by \$10. These means of production will then cost the capitalist \$120 for the day, which he, correctly, counts as part of the final price of his product.

The capitalist also hires a worker and pays him the value of his labor power, the value of the day's necessities to maintain the worker and his family—say \$40, or the equivalent of 4 hours labor. This purchased labor power Marx calls *variable capital*, because it adds more value to the final product than it has itself. The capitalist gets the worker to work for 8 hours, during which time the worker produces a number of pants. The capitalist will sell the pants for their value, which will be equal to the value of the means of production or constant capital (12 hours labor) plus the 8 hours labor added by the worker. The value of the pants is then 20 hours labor time or \$200. But the capitalist has only spent a total of \$160 on means of production and wages. He makes \$40 in surplus value on the deal.

Nothing in this example violates the law of exchange of equal values. No one got beat for their money. It's just capitalism—fair and square. The labor power and materials were bought at their value and the pants were sold at their value—*yet the capitalist still pockets a profit*.

Why? Because he paid the laborer the equivalent of four hours labor, but worked him for eight. The capitalist takes the value produced in the four hours *unpaid labor* as his surplus value. And so the capitalist's wealth grows with each passing day, while the worker must trudge back to work each day just to earn his daily meal. Marx called this creation of surplus value "the secret"—the dirty little secret—of capitalist production.

Of course, some might think this is an exaggeration. Is it? Well, yes—this example is a gross *under-estimation* of the exploitation of workers in the U.S. today! Out of every eight hours at work, the average worker in the U.S. works just over 2 hours to cover the cost of his or her wages, with the rest of the time—almost six hours—going to produce surplus for the capitalists!

The Accumulation of Capital is Accumulation of Misery for the Working Class

Capital does not stand still—it *develops*. The analysis of its development is the analysis of the *accumulation of capital*.

The capitalist accumulates capital by adding part or all of his surplus to his original capital, and then reinvesting this larger sum to reap still larger amounts of surplus. This accumulation is *not* a matter of choice—it is a necessity for the capitalist, if he is to survive as a capitalist. Were he to spend all his surplus on his own consumption, he would eventually be

driven out of business in the competitive struggle with other capitalists who reinvest most of their surplus to expand their market, introduce more efficient machinery, etc. Competition, stemming from the anarchy of capitalism, enforces a strict law on all capitalists: *expand or die*.

The capitalist invests in new machinery to increase the productivity of labor. This reduces the value—the necessary labor time—of his product below the socially necessary average of his competitors. He can undersell his competitors while still selling well above the actual value of his own products and thus make extra surplus value. His competitors must adopt the new method or face extinction. When they do, the new method will determine socially necessary labor time, the exchange value will fall and the excess surplus value will be eliminated.

In this way, machinery comes to replace labor and the "organic composition of capital" rises (i.e. the proportion of *constant* to *variable* capital). Today we call it "automation." It may result in an absolute decline in the number of workers, as in mining, longshore, etc., or just be reflected in the slower and more difficult employment of new workers (as reflected in the sky-high unemployment among minority youth).

This rise in the organic composition—which means increased organization in the individual workplace—intensifies the anarchy of production in society generally. That is, to maintain their *rate* of profit when the proportion of variable capital—i.e. wages—is dropping, the capitalists must press production to the limit.

But this drive to constantly expand production (a feature deriving from the fact that capitalism unleashes the productivity of socialized labor) runs up against an equally essential feature of capitalism—production will only go forward if it's *profitable*. At the essence of capitalism is a contradiction between the new forces of production which it creates (primarily socialized labor) and the fact that the fruits of production are privately appropriated (in general nothing will be produced unless capitalists can make a profit from its production). In capitalist crises this contradiction becomes a reality in the most brutally absurd forms: people go hungry, not because there is not enough food, but because there is too much; the country goes to ruin not because of the poverty of production, but because the vast extent of the wealth produced cannot be realized as *capital*—it cannot be sold at a profit.

Under competitive capitalism crises had the effect of clearing away the less effective capitalists and accelerating the accumulation of capital. Even here, however, Marx pointed out, "And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby the crises are prevented." (*Communist Manifesto*)

With the rise of imperialism, capitalism is more continuously in decay, its crises less frequent and periodic—but when they hit, they hit much harder. And the ways out that Marx pointed to—destruction of productive forces and the conquest of markets—take place in the context of a world already carved up among these imperialist gangsters. So war to re-divide the world becomes part of the regular functioning of international capitalism.

As the accumulation of capital accelerates, there are progressively larger concentrations of capital in the hands of individual—and fewer—capitalists. These greater concentrations of capital make possible and necessary the development of even larger production operations, more advanced machinery, etc. and the cycle starts over at a higher level. The process is accelerated by the centralization of already existing capitals, as thousands of smaller capitalists are crushed in the competitive struggle and taken over by bigger capitalists, and as scattered capitals are fused together into giant corporations. This process has been demonstrated on a vast scale in the U.S. where by 1968 the 200 largest manufacturing corporations held over 60% of all manufacturing assets.

Thus the development of capitalism: millions are set to work by the capitalists in huge factories around the world, producing a material wealth that the world never before even dreamed of. But at the same time capital, the control over these vast productive forces, becomes concentrated in the hands of a very few modern super-parasites. The contradiction between social production and private accumulation sharpens—and around the turn of the century this contradiction took a leap into the highest and final stage of capitalism: imperialism.

Basic Features of Imperialism Analyzed by Lenin

Imperialism developed fully after the death of Marx. It fell to V.I. Lenin to analyze the advent of the era of imperialism, and its meaning for the international working-class struggle.

"Imperialism is capitalism in that stage of development in which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital has established itself; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun; in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed." (*Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, FLP, p. 106)

The essential characteristic of imperialism is the dominance of monopoly, which inevitably results from the trends to concentration and centralization of capital explained earlier. Monopoly control is apparent today as a handful of corporations control every industry; GM, Ford and Chrysler in auto; Exxon, Mobil, Shell, BP, Texaco, Gulf, California Standard and Indiana Standard in oil; and on and on.

But imperialism is even more dominated by monopoly than a glance at the major corporations would imply. Lenin pointed out that banking capital too becomes monopolized and takes on a much more significant role under imperialism:

"... the concentration of capital and the growth of bank turnover are radically changing the significance of the banks. Scattered capitalists are transformed into a single collective capitalist. When carrying the current accounts of a few capitalists, a bank, as it were, transacts a purely technical and exclusively auxiliary operation. When, however, this operation grows to enormous dimensions we find that a handful of monopolists subordinate to their will all the operations, both commercial and industrial, of the whole of capitalist society; for they obtain the opportunity—by means of their banking connections, their current accounts and other financial operations—first, to *ascertain exactly* the financial position of the various capitalists, then to *control* them, to influence them by restricting or enlarging, facilitating or hindering credits, and finally *entirely determine* their fate, determine their income, deprive them of capital, or permit them to increase their capital rapidly and to enormous dimensions." (*ibid.*, p. 37)

The upshot of all this is the gradual merging of the dominant industrial and banking capitals into *finance capital*—a relative handful of huge blocs of capital that have their tentacles in every industry and reach out to every corner of the world: what Lenin dubbed the financial oligarchy. This is parasitism—on a grand and bloated scale.

In the U.S., for instance as of 1968, 18 financial groups controlled capital assets worth \$678.4 billion. Taking the Rockefeller family, for example, we find a family fortune of over \$20 billion, control of the world's biggest corporations, Exxon, Chase Manhattan Bank (one of the biggest banks), another half dozen giant banks and insurance companies and some 30 of the top 200 industrial enterprises in the U.S.

Imperialism means a much higher degree of socialization of the productive forces than under pre-monopoly capitalism. Production is now extremely centralized, the raw materials and markets of the entire world are surveyed and taken into account, and production is coordinated not only in a single plant but for whole sections of the globe. But this hardly means that socialism is developing!

"Production becomes social, but appropriation remains private. The social means of production remain the private property of a few. The general framework of formally recognized free competition remains, but the yoke of a few monopolists on the rest of the population becomes a hundred times heavier, more burdensome and intolerable." (*ibid.*, p. 25)

The contradiction between socialization and anarchy becomes even more, not less, intense. Now this contradiction—in both its aspects—is

raised to a world scale. For example, production is shut down in one place, pulled by the constant chase for higher profit, to more profitable investment some place else. Monopoly doesn't eliminate competition—it transforms it to a higher level, not only between monopoly and non-monopoly capitalists, but even more significant in the battle of the huge blocs of finance capital against each other over markets, raw materials, prices, spheres of investments, etc.

Export of Capital

Typical of the old capitalism, when free competition had undivided sway, was the export of *goods*. Typical of the latest stage of capitalism, when monopolies rule, is the export of *capital*. With the development of imperialism, a huge surplus of capital arises in the imperialist countries—surplus in the sense that due to monopoly control and carving up of domestic markets it can no longer be *profitably* invested in the home country. Meanwhile, opportunities for highly profitable investment in the economically backward areas draw capital like a magnet.

"In these backward countries," wrote Lenin, "profits are unusually high, for capital is scarce, the price of land is relatively low, wages are low, raw materials are cheap. The possibility of exporting capital is created by the fact that a number of backward countries have already been drawn into world capitalist intercourse; main railways have either been or are being built there, the elementary conditions for industrial development have been created, etc. The necessity for exporting capital arises from the fact that in a few countries capitalism has become 'overripe' and... cannot find a field for 'profitable' investment." (*ibid.*, pp. 73-74)

With the export of capital occupying an increasingly important place in the imperialist economy, the various blocs of finance capital divide up the world, with each creating, defending and expanding worldwide empires. This division of course is ten times more cutthroat than the shifting alliances and wars that the crime families engage in when they negotiate to divide up the spoils, because much much more is at stake.

Parallel to and flowing from this division, is the division of the world itself among the great imperialist powers. Each imperialist government gears up to defend the international interests of the bourgeoisies that control them in the first place.

First imperialism divides the world between oppressor and oppressed nations—that is, between imperialist powers and the economically backward countries that they exploit and dominate. The imperialists take over and distort the economies of these countries, wrecking native industry and agriculture, subordinating them to the needs of the empire, robbing raw materials and resources, and grinding the masses with brutal impoverishment—incredible unemployment on the one hand, vicious super-exploitation on the other. In 1973 the United States had, in direct

investments alone, almost \$28 billion in the oppressed nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America with a rate of return almost six times as high as on the average domestic investments.

The imperialists also fight to divide the world among each other, as various imperialist powers try to expand their spheres of domination at the expense of their rivals. Their tremendous productive resources become the basis not for advancing humanity, but for world war.

The contradictions of capitalism now become played out on a world scale. The imperialist powers mass huge military machines to attempt to crush the resistance and rebellion among the oppressed nations and to contend with each other over who will get what share of the world's plunder and booty.

War and Revolution

The division of the world among the imperialist powers cannot and does not remain static. Some powers run up against obstacles, or for one reason or another decay more rapidly; others develop in strength, their economies developing in leaps and bounds in comparison to a more decayed rival. At a certain point the division of the world no longer even approximately corresponds to the relative strength of the various powers.

But the redivision of the world cannot be neatly and peacefully arbitrated—too much is at stake. That is why there have already been two world wars in this century and why a third one now looms. It is these spirals from war to war that set the context for the development of the economies and crises in the various capitalist countries. These imperialist wars to redivide the world reorganize capital by changing the balance of forces internationally. Coming hand in bloody hand with economic crisis, these imperialist wars show up the criminal absurdity and the death-bound nature of capitalism. As Lenin put it, "It is the great significance of all crises that they make manifest what has been hidden, they cast aside all that is relative, superficial and reveal the real mainsprings of the *class struggle*." ("Lesson of the Crises," Vol. 24, p. 213)

For the U.S. today to peacefully agree to give up huge chunks of turf to its Soviet rival is absurd—its economic bloc is already disintegrating and they are forced to go for an even more favorable redivision of the world as the only way to resolve it. And as for the Soviet Union—where capitalist rule was restored in 1956 and where there is an imperialist ruling class that is a highly centralized one and is based on state (capitalist) control of most of the resources—while not conforming in every way to the general "model" of imperialism, they too are driven by the contradictions of capitalism and can only hope for a resolution through war and redivision.

The Era of Proletarian Revolution

Because imperialism intensifies the contradictions of capitalism on a

world scale, it is the era of proletarian revolution.

The world economy is socialized to an incredible degree, but this very socialization takes place within a decayed, parasitical shell, and the wealth of the entire world now flows into the coffers of a literal handful of giant leeches. In the main imperialist countries this means huge sections of the economy given over to finance, credit, speculation, etc. A vast government bureaucracy and military machinery is built—and built on the bones of the world's people. This plunder also, in the short run, allows the capitalists to buy off a minority of the working class with the crumbs from their pirate's feast and helps them to prevent the rise of a class-conscious workers' movement. Nevertheless its main effect is to grind down the masses of workers (especially as they find themselves increasingly prepared for their role as cannon fodder in imperialist war). In addition, this plunder gives rise to storms of revolutionary struggle in the oppressed nations of the world.

Especially as imperialism lurches toward war, the acuteness of its contradictions stand out. Stalin wrote that

"The significance of the imperialist war . . . lies among other things in the fact that it gathered all these contradictions into a single knot and threw them onto the scales, thereby accelerating and facilitating the revolutionary battles of the proletariat." (*Foundations of Leninism*)

Such revolutionary battles will punctuate the entire epoch of imperialism, intensifying with each spiral of division, redivision, war and revolution, until the proletariat and its allies have finally wiped out exploitation once and for all, and driven the vicious beast of imperialist oppression out of the world and into the pages of history.

Some recommended readings on political economy:

Marx, Wage-Labor and Capital

Lenin, Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism, especially chapters 7-10

Other suggested readings:

Marx, Capital, Vol. 1

Political Economy (Banner Press)

Dictatorship of the Proletariat: Touchstone of Marxism

"The theories of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat are the quintessence of Marxism-Leninism. The questions of whether revolution should be upheld or opposed and whether the dictatorship of the proletariat should be upheld or opposed have always been the focus of struggle between Marxism-Leninism and all brands of revisionism . . ." (*On Khrushchov's Phoney Communism and Its Historical Lessons for the World*)

This was the strong stand of the Chinese Communist Party under Mao's leadership against the distortions and perversions of Marxism by the traitors to revolution who had seized back power in the Soviet Union in the late '50s. This declaration drew a bold and unmistakable dividing line between Marxism and revisionism.

But what is the importance of such dividing lines? Is such struggle, as some think, merely irrelevant quarreling that should be put aside for more important things? Or does it bear critically on the conditions and struggles that the broad masses face? This article will take up this question of the dividing lines between Marxism and revisionism and in doing so will focus on what indeed is the "quintessence of Marxism-Leninism": proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But first, a brief definition of revisionism. Revisionism is opposition to Marxism carried out in the name of Marxism. It first arose in the late 19th century, after Marxism had in a number of countries thoroughly defeated all other ideologies claiming to be for socialism. These ideologies had arisen from the petty bourgeoisie—that is, the middle strata of peasants and small farmers, petty businessmen, craftsmen, teachers, intellectuals, etc.—which both felt itself crushed by and hated the rule of the

bourgeoisie, but equally resisted its only real alternative: the rule of the working class.

Reflecting their "in-between" position, these middle forces dreamed of a socialism somehow free of both class struggle and the anarchy of capitalism, in which "reasonable people would make things work." In practice, as we shall see, such dreaming—when concentrated into an ideological and political line—inevitably ends by siding with the bourgeoisie.

With the victory of Marxism over these various trends in many countries, they generally took a new form: one of claiming adherence to Marxism with certain "revisions" made necessary by new developments, unforeseen by Marx—hence, the label "revisionism." Revisionism, whatever its particular strain—and there are many varieties of this infection—achieves remarkable unity on one point: opposition to the proletarian revolution and, following that, proletarian dictatorship.

Proletarian Revolution—Basic Principle of Marxism

Lenin clearly and simply outlined the nature of any and every state apparatus in a 1919 lecture: "If you examine the state from the standpoint of this fundamental division, you will find that before the division of society into classes, as I have already said, no state existed. But as the social division into classes arose and took firm root, as class society arose, the state also arose and took firm root . . . it has always been a certain apparatus which stood outside society and consisted of a group of people engaged solely, or almost solely, or mainly, in ruling . . . This apparatus, this group of people who rule others, always possesses certain means of coercion, of physical force, irrespective of whether this violence over people is expressed in the primitive club, or in the more perfected types of weapons in the epoch of slavery, or in the fire-arms which appeared in the Middle Ages, or, finally, in modern weapons, which in the twentieth century are technical marvels and are based entirely on the latest achievements of modern technology." ("The State," *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 477)

Mao Tsetung summed it up even more succinctly: "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun."

And when an exploiting class rules, those guns always point in just one direction: at the oppressed and exploited. The routine use of court injunctions and police violence in strikes; the police assaults against demonstrations carried out by special tactical units numbering in the hundreds; the particularly vicious terror carried out against Blacks and other minority nationalities, especially in the course of fighting for change; and, of course, the use of the state machinery to hound, repress and straight-up murder revolutionaries (with Comrade Bob Avakian the main current case in point) all bear this out.

True, the bourgeois state does have a *secondary* function of settling conflicts among its own, and at times the courts and even troops might be

called in. But these instances are rare, and are *not* cases of the "neutral state sticking up for the little guy"—as the bourgeoisie and their revisionist hand-maidens would have it. For example, the use of federal troops in the South in a few symbolic instances to enforce court-ordered school desegregation was the result of a policy agreed on by the main sectors of the bourgeoisie to both clean up the U.S. image so as to be better able to politically get over internationally in the oppressed nations, and at the same time to channel the Black struggle then beginning to surge with unprecedented power into "acceptable" outlets (fighting for reforms and relying on the bourgeoisie and its state).

The state in every exploiting society poses as being above classes, as a neutral umpire of different class interests. But from its origin with the development of the first class societies, the state has always been a tool of suppression in the hands of the dominant class.

Indeed, the state cannot ultimately even reconcile different exploiting classes: note that in every European country the bourgeoisie could only gain state power by taking up arms against the old feudal monarchies and erecting instead one form or another of bourgeois republic.

For these reasons—the nature of the state as an organ of class suppression, and its intrinsic connection to the ruling class which created it—violent revolution is a necessity for the proletariat. For those who doubt this, the U.S. ruling class has demonstrated *its* nature by its stunningly brutal war in Indochina, its slaughter of unarmed protesters at Kent State, Attica and countless other places, its support of butchering puppets from Zaire to Chile to Korea, and its invariable suppression of groups that actually do work for revolution. Plainly the ruling class which does not hesitate to unleash its dogs against non-revolutionary groups in non-revolutionary periods in this country, and which will travel the world to put down revolution in other countries, will hardly agree to come along peacefully when their very existence is at stake!

Yet a hallmark of revisionism is, in one form or another, to claim just that! Revisionists have been remarkably consistent and even more remarkably creative in their ability to find hitherto unknown virtues in bourgeois democracy.

For instance, revisionists like the "Communist" Party, USA insist on dividing the U.S. bourgeoisie and its state apparatus into a sane and sensible wing on the one hand, and a crazy, ultra-right one on the other. Yes, they may concede, the working class should probably take independent action, but . . . since Kennedy is "more sensitive to the needs of the oppressed" than Reagan or Carter, that means lining up behind him. The "C" PUSA makes a phony "revolutionary" strategy out of the tactical differences that Kennedy and the forces he represents may have with other sections of the bourgeoisie—and even more so, going along with the old Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde routine in which the bourgeoisie always has at least one phony spokesman for the oppressed out there, the "C" PUSA goes all

out to pin the proletariat to the tail of the bourgeois donkey—all in the name of communism!

As for violent revolution? The "C" PUSA envisions the election of an "anti-monopoly coalition" which will then find itself compelled to pass a constitutional amendment outlawing imperialism! True, they attach a rider mentioning the possibility of bourgeois resistance to such an "amendment," but quickly rush to say that "in today's world the possibility exists of creating such a relationship of forces that monopoly capital can be prevented from attempting to drown the popular will in blood." (See *New Program of the CPUSA*, 1970)

Such an insane fantasy would be funny if it didn't play on real illusions among people and if it hadn't *itself* already resulted in "drowning the popular will in blood," most especially in Chile. There the revisionist CP of Chile promised socialism through the ballot, a socialism to be gained without disarming—let alone, *smashing*—the bourgeois army. In fact, the CP of Chile literally disarmed the masses so as not to provoke the military—a move that resulted days later in a bloody military coup in which 30,000 were murdered. Such are the disastrous results and criminal nature of this line!

Plainly, there is no way to break the power of the bourgeoisie except through forcibly smashing the bourgeois state apparatus, disintegrating its army from within while at the same time crushing it (as well as the police forces), and, in short, depriving the exploiters of every weapon in the arsenal of their dictatorship. The revisionists, however, actively fight this understanding in their hope to use the masses and their struggle as just so much leverage for a niche in the bourgeois setup, and to that end they push dreams and illusions that reduce the proletariat to a bargaining chip in someone else's game.

Dictatorship of the Proletariat

When the revolutionary situation ripens in which the proletariat can lead the *masses* to make revolution, it launches armed insurrection. The working class first aims to smash the bourgeois power in several key areas, then raises an army to fight the inevitable civil war to determine nationwide political power. (This model mainly applies to developed capitalist countries—various important modifications, which this article will not go into, come into play in the semi-colonial, semi-feudal countries oppressed by imperialism. However, both the armed nature of the revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat that follows it are common to all countries.)

On smashing the bourgeois state the proletariat moves to establish its own state power—the dictatorship of the proletariat. This proletarian dictatorship differs from all previous states, in which a minority of exploiters dictates to the majority of people, but tries to hide it. Since the proletarian state is a dictatorship of the majority over the minority, of the formerly

exploited over their erstwhile masters, it has no need to conceal or misrepresent what it is doing.

Much more fundamentally different is the purpose and goal of the proletarian dictatorship. The proletarian state works to eliminate itself—that is, to create the basis for the day when humankind will need no state because it will have passed out of the stage of class division.

Socialism, then, is a transition period in which the proletariat has the historical task of not only dictating to the vanquished but still fiercely resistant bourgeoisie, but also of step by step eliminating all inequalities and class distinctions, rooting out all the "look out for number one" thinking and culture characteristic of capitalism, and continually overthrowing and suppressing the newborn bourgeoisie that is continually spawned by the backward remnants of capitalism.

The proletariat uses its dictatorship to consciously struggle to transform all of society until it advances worldwide to the stage of communism where, in Marx's words, "the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labor, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labor has vanished . . . labor has become not only a means of life but life's prime want (and) the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly." (*Critique of the Gotha Programme*)

Revisionist Opposition to Proletarian Rule

Revisionism, which makes a specialty of opposing armed revolution, naturally opposes its result: the dictatorship of the proletariat. Kautsky, the foremost revisionist to do battle with Lenin, either outrightly opposed the very phrase "dictatorship of the proletariat" as an unfortunate slip of the tongue on the part of Marx and Engels, or else envisioned one that, in his own words, was no different from British bourgeois democracy, complete with a "monarchy at the top"!

The "C" PUSA, for its part, tries to evade the question altogether by never mentioning the phrase in its entire program. However, they did let their vision of "socialism" slip out a little bit when their chairman and presidential candidate Gus Hall promised on national TV in 1976 that if elected he could definitely work with a Republican-dominated Congress!

Khrushchev, who led the revisionist takeover in the Soviet Union in 1956, not only wanted to speculate on the names of Marx and Engels, as Kautsky did, he also wanted to drape himself in Lenin's mantle. Thus Khrushchev admitted that proletarian dictatorship may have been necessary in the past, but by 1956 such a thing was clearly out of date. Instead he called for a "state of the whole people," since he claimed that antagonistic classes and class struggle no longer existed in the Soviet Union. This, of course, is no different from the bourgeois myth of a state "of, by and for the people" that covers over their fierce domination of the

people.

This slick distortion of Khrushchev's was thoroughly demolished by Mao Tsetung, who convincingly proved that classes and class struggle persist for the entire historical period of socialism and that the state—until its abolition altogether—can, in the words of Marx, “be nothing but the *revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*.” Khrushchev's ploy was the move of the *new* bourgeoisie, in particular, to capitalist restoration, which takes revisionism as its ideological and political cover. This bourgeoisie is concentrated in the highest echelons of the Party and tries to convert the socialist state into a “state capitalism” in which the state owns the means of production—but in which also this new elite controls the state, and uses it to suck surplus out of the working class, in the manner of *all* bourgeoisies.

Mao's discovery was a landmark advance in the history of Marxism. Lenin had recognized the protracted nature of class struggle under socialism, and grappled with the developing bureaucracy even in the young Soviet state. But Lenin lived only a few years under proletarian rule, and tended to identify the individual production of the peasants as the chief social basis for capitalist restoration. Stalin, who succeeded Lenin, defended the first socialist state and made a number of great contributions, but failed to really grasp the nature of class struggle under socialism and made some serious mistakes in this sphere.

Learning from the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and the errors of Stalin, and basing himself on Marx and Lenin (who described socialism as a “period of struggle between nascent communism and dying capitalism”), Mao showed that the bourgeois hangovers enumerated by Marx—e.g. the contradiction between mental and manual labor, the contradiction between workers and peasants, various other inequalities, the persistence of individual production and the backward thinking all these remnants generated—were the soil on which new bourgeoisies took root and grew.

The proletariat must constantly struggle against and overthrow new bourgeoisies, while digging up “their soil” through socialist transformations in the course of that struggle, or else capitalist restoration is bound to happen.

Why is the new bourgeoisie concentrated in the high reaches of the Party? Because under socialism, from being the hunted and hounded champions of the powerless, overnight the Party and its members achieve power, including power over the means of production. There then begins a tremendous pull toward becoming a new establishment, to ruling at first in place of and very soon *over* the working class, rather than continuing even under socialism in the revolutionary role of unleashing the masses to change the world and carry forward the revolution.

This phenomenon, especially when corruption and degeneration actually occur, is pointed to by the bourgeoisie as evidence that “power cor-

rupts,” or “there'll always be big shots,” and used to promote the view that therefore it's no use to try to change things. The revisionists for their part make it a question of whether people on top can take care of business for the masses or not. Mao showed, to the contrary, that the presence of the bourgeoisie in the Party was due to the level of development of society—materially, culturally and politically—and that their nature could certainly be understood, their plots defeated, and their existence eventually eliminated through struggle.

Mao not only called out the bourgeoisie in the Party, he scientifically showed the material basis for it and led in developing the means to fight it, best exemplified in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The Cultural Revolution in China was truly “continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat” as it roused tens of millions of Chinese in a struggle to take back the power usurped by the new bourgeoisie, and in doing so to further transform socialist China in the direction of communism. Through this process, the masses struggled against the “capitalist roaders” (as they were called) in various spheres of power, simultaneously studying and criticizing the line these bourgeois elements had pushed (which is always precisely *revisionism*), and consolidated the struggle through transforming the particular institution in question to be more in harmony with the proletariat's advance to true classless society.

The thrust of the Cultural Revolution was in a sense anticipated by Lenin's insight that “Our aim is to draw the *whole of the poor* into the practical work of administration, and every step that is taken in this direction—the more varied they are, the better—should be carefully recorded, studied, systematized, tested by wider experience and embodied in law. Our aim is to insure that *every* toiler, after having finished his 8 hours “task” in productive labor, shall perform state duties *without pay*; the transition to this is particularly difficult, but it is only this transition that can guarantee the final consolidation of socialism.”

But the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution realized this in practice in a qualitatively higher way than any previous revolutionary movement, for it was an attempt to crush the now recognized new bourgeoisie. Mao's development of Marxism-Leninism is like a spike driven into the side of the sheer mountain face that the proletariat must firmly grasp to climb still higher and reach the next peak in the ascent to communism. Thus it is not surprising that today many are trying to pull it out and deny the proletariat its crucial hand-hold just as the bourgeoisie and earlier revisionists tried to “pull out” the thesis developed by Marx and then Lenin on violent proletarian revolution and proletarian dictatorship. The Soviet Union and the parties under its wing, the Chinese betrayers of Mao and *their* flunkies, and even the backstabbing Party of Labor of Albania and their pathetic camp followers all focus their fire on Mao's theory of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The revisionists who rule China today accuse Mao's close comrade

Chang Chun-chiao of remarking in the margins of Lenin's thesis (that only those who recognize the dictatorship of the proletariat are genuine Marxists) that *today*, only those who uphold continuing the revolution under proletarian dictatorship are genuine Marxists. They hope to freeze Leninism into a dogma, to use the letter of it against Lenin's tremendous revolutionary line and spirit. To the revisionists' pathetic charge, all revolutionary Marxists plead "innocent as charged."

Upholding Mao and this immortal contribution is today the key dividing line in the international communist movement. And as this article has shown, these dividing lines are not paper-thin points of argument but razor-sharp knives of struggle that the proletariat must have firmly in hand for its no-quarter-given battle. On the one side stands revisionism pushed by contemptible traitors to try to dull the blade of the working class and serve the bourgeoisie; on the other is Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought in the hands of the revolutionary proletariat. And war to the knife is always war to the death.

Recommended readings:

State and Revolution, Lenin, Chapters I and V

Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions, Avakian, Chapter 6

Suggested reading:

The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky, Lenin

Revolution in the U.S.A. The Line of the RCP

This series has so far made clear the historic inevitability of proletarian revolution, especially in the sense that until the fetters of capitalism are finally shattered and buried, masses will constantly be propelled to rise up in struggle against their exploitation and oppression, learning more each time, until final victory.

But at the same time, revolution is a *conscious* act made by classes and people who are armed with a correct understanding of the world and how to change it. Anyone who expects to wake up one morning and find that the revolution has come, without years of painstaking preparation and activity by those who see now the need for it to come, will never see it. Or, as Mao once put it, the dust doesn't move of its own accord, it must be swept away by the broom. In the U.S. this means the fiery broom of proletarian revolution, armed insurrection to overthrow the greatest exploiters in the world today and in doing so not only emancipate the workers of this country, but detonate revolutionary explosions the world over, as masses of oppressed everywhere, inspired by the example of proletarian revolution in the U.S., and with a top international force of oppression destroyed, will pour into the streets to celebrate victory here with shouts of joy, clenched fists and upraised guns.

History has entrusted a tremendous task to the U.S. working class, a task which we may well have the opportunity to carry through in the decade ahead! But to actually do it, the proletariat must have a "general staff" to lead in the revolutionary battle, a vanguard party basing itself on Marxism-Leninism in order to both learn from the masses and simultaneously imbue them with the ability to correctly understand and change the world.

The Revolutionary Communist Party, U.S.A. (RCP) is that vanguard, the political Party of the U.S. working class and a part of the communist movement internationally. This article will explain how the RCP applies Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought to the concrete conditions of the world today, and the U.S. in particular, in order to lead the masses to make revolution, and will show how its line developed in the course of struggle including struggle against opportunist lines and the influence of the bourgeoisie inside the revolutionary movement.

Create Public Opinion . . . Seize Power

Today a situation in which the proletariat can mount an insurrection and seize power does not exist in the U.S. Yet the deepening crisis faced by the imperialists, the accelerating moves to world war to resolve that crisis, and the quickening eruptions of mass struggle and intensifying questions and concern of millions of people indicate the *seeds* of a possible future revolutionary situation in the period ahead—one in which the ruling class can no longer politically rule in the old way, and the torment of the masses drags them by the tens of millions into political life and instills in them the willingness to fight and die to change things.

Thus while a revolutionary situation doesn't exist *today*, neither is the situation today somehow totally divorced from the upheaval and turmoil of tomorrow. And in fact, the kind of work and preparation carried on today is what in large part will determine whether that upheaval will merely flare up and then die down or if instead the masses will be able to finally carry things through to revolution.

What then are our tasks today? How does the Party conduct its work among the masses? What is its strategy?

The central task of the Party is concentrated in Mao's famous slogan, "Create public opinion . . . seize power." The Party must raise the consciousness of the masses, until through the development of the objective situation and the work of the Party, they become convinced of the need for revolution. At that point the Party organizes and leads the armed insurrection, and the struggle to seize and consolidate power.

The Party mainly does this through conducting agitation around the burning events of the day, training the workers through countless concrete cases to see the *real* class interests at work in society, interests that are normally camouflaged by the ceaseless din and thick smokescreen of the bourgeois media, its politicians, other agents, etc. Only through persevering in this, focusing on the biggest social questions of the day, can the workers' consciousness be developed into *class-consciousness*: i.e., an understanding of the historic mission of the working class to make revolution, lead society forward and carry the struggle through to communism.

The Party's central weapon in this is its newspaper, the *Revolutionary Worker*. The weekly circulation of this paper creates a network of tens of thousands today, and millions tomorrow, who are able to respond

as one behind the line and interests of the working class. In addition to agitation around all events of society, which simply, boldly and repeatedly draws out the class contradictions of society, the Party also carries on propaganda work, which gives a more all-sided and sweeping understanding of the system than agitation alone can, although of necessity reaching fewer people. Through this work new forces are trained in a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary outlook and the Party grows and is strengthened in close connection with the strengthening of the broader revolutionary movement.

Even in building key struggles that the proletariat and its allies must initiate or support at critical junctures—such as Revolutionary May Day, or the struggle to free Bob Avakian and the Mao Defendants, or particularly concentrated instances of struggles against imperialist aggression, national oppression, etc—the Party's central weapon is still its newspaper, by which the masses are consistently educated to the stakes of various battles and impelled to act.

Mass Line

But to wield the weapon of its press, to carry out vital and revealing agitation, and generally to carry through the struggle to classless society overall when the distinction between the Party and the masses will essentially cease and the Party itself go out of existence, the Party must learn from and lead the working class and its allies in the application of the *mass line*.

"In all the practical work of our Party," wrote Mao Tsetung, "all correct leadership is necessarily 'from the masses, to the masses.' This means take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action." ("Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership," *Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 120)

This does not mean merely reflecting back to the masses what they already know or are prepared to do—if that was the point, then why *have* a party? To apply the mass line requires studying the science of Marxism and the experience of the class struggle broadly and historically. To take an example of what it *does* mean, look at the call for revolutionary May Day 1980: here "scattered and unsystematic ideas" such as the hatred of millions for this system, the acutely felt lack among these same millions (and millions more just beginning to question things) of a living driving working-class force that can actually change things, and the sense among these masses of the rapidly changing objective situation are traced to their essentials, concentrated into a bold policy—based in part on the initiative of the masses that was unleashed both around previous May Day

celebrations and highly charged political actions like the demonstration against Teng Hsiao-ping in Washington last January—and taken to the masses until they take them up as their own and translate them into action. And, in the course of this May Day campaign, as the line has begun to unleash the initiative of the masses and new things have been created by them, further summation and application of the mass line on a higher level will be necessary in order to advance, and so on in an endless upward spiral.

Constant application of the mass line is essential to the Party and to the masses—should the Party either cut itself off from the masses' experience, or (what is more generally the error made by the communist movement historically and internationally) should it blindly tail the masses' level of understanding, failing to *concentrate* what is correct and advance it to a *higher* level, then the revolutionary links between the Party and the masses will be severed, the relationship robbed of its dynamism, and the Party will eventually turn into an *obstacle* to the masses' struggle to know and transform the world.

United Front Against Imperialism

The strategy for proletarian revolution in the U.S. is the united front against imperialism under proletarian leadership. This strategy points out the stage of society and the main enemy—imperialism; and on that basis it analyzes the potential allies of the proletariat. The imperialists not only exploit the proletariat, they also drive down large groups and sections of the rest of the people, most of whom have no future under this system. Further, the contradictions that characterize imperialism—at bottom the contradiction between socialized production and private appropriation which is manifested not only in the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat but also, flowing from that, the system's oppression of minorities, women and youth; its drive to dominate the world, periodically leading to wars; and its tendency to crush farmers, small businessmen and other petty-bourgeois strata—continually erupt and drive the masses into struggle and political life, creating many potential strong allies for proletarian revolution.

To win these allies, the Party must lead the proletariat to support these outbreaks and struggles, and to direct the main spearhead of struggle against the imperialists. The Party *diverts* these struggles from their spontaneous course, relying first and foremost on the class-conscious workers to bring the revolutionary outlook and interests of the proletariat to the fore, exposing the real enemy and propagating the solution of proletarian revolution. Since many forces come into battle against the bourgeoisie with conflicting viewpoints, ideas and interests, this task is a complex one requiring firmness in principle and, based on that, flexibility in tactics.

The key alliance of the united front—its solid core—is the revo-

lutionary unity of the working-class movement with the struggles of the oppressed nationalities in this country against their oppression as peoples. The savage oppression of minority peoples has been central to the entire history of the U.S., and struggle against that oppression is a powerful engine driving forward the class struggle. Further, the fact that today the majority of Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican and many other oppressed nationality peoples are members of the single multinational U.S. working class makes this solid core all the more possible and necessary to forge.

How can this decisive unity be forged? The Party, through tireless agitation and exposure, and through building on the role of the struggles of oppressed nationalities as sparks to the working class's own political struggle and understanding, struggles to imbue the working class with a proletarian-revolutionary understanding of this question. It fights the bourgeoisie's constant efforts to either win the white workers to oppose the struggle against national oppression, or else to keep the more class-conscious workers of all nationalities in a passive relationship to these struggles. Within the national movements the Party brings to the fore the fact that the enemy is indeed the imperialist system, that only proletarian revolution can wipe out national oppression by wiping out its source, and in doing so relies on the minority workers as the main force within the national movements. Only by winning the working class to take up and lead the fight against all oppression, including national oppression, while fighting for proletarian leadership in the national movements, can the solid core of the united front be formed, and the victory of the revolution made possible.

Proletarian Internationalism

But the U.S. working class can hardly limit its strategic sights to the U.S. The proletariat is an international class, waging a united struggle around the world to advance along the path of socialist revolution to communism: and further, the U.S. proletariat lives in the home of one of the two biggest imperialist exploiters, with its tentacles gripping and squeezing masses of workers and peasants the world over.

Revolutionary struggles in other countries, especially those dominated by U.S. imperialism, are a tremendous aid to the working class here, weakening our own rulers (as well as accumulating advanced revolutionary experience to learn from). But because the U.S. has used the crumbs of its worldwide plunder to pacify a section of the working class here, the bourgeoisie has some success in winning workers to see these battles not as the fight of allies that must be supported, but as something alien to their interests. Further, the bourgeoisie is impelled to do this because they must try to get the workers to fight and die not for their own class's freedom, here and worldwide, but the starred-and-striped trademark on their leg irons.

In the face of this, the Party recognizes the absolute necessity to win

the working class to proletarian internationalism, to support the struggles of the working class and oppressed people everywhere, especially when it is the U.S. rulers and their empire that are targeted. Any slackening in this effort, any failure to carry it through, will not only strengthen the hand of reaction worldwide, it will allow the bourgeoisie to put off revolution in this country indefinitely. And this is all the more underscored by the looming war, in which only a proletariat trained through a thousand concrete instances in internationalism will be able to resist the bourgeoisie's calls—which are nothing but calls to slaves to fight other slaves in defense of the plantation—and instead take advantage of the weakness of its rulers to press forward to revolution. And as events of the day increasingly show, this is not a debater's point or a dreamer's fantasy, but an urgent task and a very possible prospect.

Development of the RCP

The RCP is the Party that can lead the masses to take advantage of the opportunities that will assuredly arise in the decade ahead. But this is not because its members are somehow more courageous, sincere or intelligent than the other groups that went before it and failed. Rather, it's because this Party has based itself on linking Marxism-Leninism to the struggles of the masses to develop and fight for a correct revolutionary line. This question of *line* is indeed the cardinal question.

The most decisive struggle over line occurred following the 1976 revisionist coup in China. The RCP had from its beginning drawn inspiration from and struggled to grasp the immortal contributions of Mao Tsetung, especially his leadership in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

Yet with the defeat of Mao's closest comrades following his death, and the purge, jailing and murder of thousands and thousands of revolutionaries, these contributions came under severe attack, not only in China but in the international communist movement too.

Connected to this in the U.S. was the fact that the movements of the '60s had finally and clearly ebbed—in the words of rebel musician Gil Scott-Heron, it was "winter in America"—though it was becoming increasingly clear that there were great revolutionary storms on the horizon.

At this crossroads, two lines formed, both internationally and within the RCP. One concluded that since the revolutionaries in China had lost in the latest round, they had been wrong all along. Further, since times had changed in the U.S., the best thing to do was to adapt to the ebb—and even more, to duck our heads in the face of the much greater tests coming—by watering down the revolutionary message of the Party and submerging it under whatever currents of spontaneous struggle might roll ashore. This was a safe, and deadly, formula for caving in to the enemy.

Against this was the correct line which insisted on upholding revolu-

tionary principle. Had the revolutionaries in China been defeated? If so, then our duty was to study more deeply their line and the battles they had waged so as to defend their contributions when under attack and support the proletariat in a difficult and fierce struggle. Had the revolutionary movement of the '60s temporarily ebbed? All the more reason, then, to gain a more rational understanding of its great contributions as well as its shortcomings, to go down deeper among the masses to those who still burn with revolutionary ardor, and to strive to keep the proletariat's revolutionary consciousness tense and advance its understanding. These two lines hardened into two camps within the RCP: one which came to be dubbed the "Mensheviks" after their opportunist predecessors in Russia in Lenin's time, and the other, made up of the genuine revolutionaries in the Party, which was led by Comrade Bob Avakian.

Due to the extremely complex nature of the questions involved, the difficulties in the objective situation just outlined, and the long American tradition of pragmatism that had totally corroded revolutionary movements before the RCP and was eating away at our Party too, the Mensheviks mustered a very serious attempt to seize the leadership of the Party and change its line. At this point, in late 1977, the leadership of Comrade Avakian, Chairman of the Party's Central Committee, was decisive. Chairman Avakian's thesis on China—"Revisionists Are Revisionists and Must Not Be Supported, Revolutionaries Are Revolutionaries and Must Be Supported"—was presented to the Party Central Committee for debate. The clarity and force of the arguments, their undeniable Marxist and revolutionary content, rallied the proletarian forces in the Party who still burnt to make revolution. His thoroughgoing materialist analysis of the setback in China wiped away the demoralization of the setback and tempered the Party and its supporters in their understanding of the tortuous nature of proletarian revolution. The leadership of Comrade Avakian was the difference between the Party being more or less shattered as a *real* revolutionary force, and what actually happened—the growth and development of its influence and ability to rally the revolutionary-minded masses around a revolutionary line.

In the course of this struggle, two opposed lines on revolution in the U.S. also became clear. The Mensheviks had promoted all sorts of formulas and accepted conventions that had been handed down from the international communist movement in the '30s and '40s. While in the main the Party and RU had always carried out a revolutionary line, the Menshevik line, the weight of a tradition that had, on analysis, been seriously affected with reformism, and the overall pull of spontaneity took their toll. Either the Party would nurture and develop the revolutionary core and kernel of its line, and flush the revisionist sludge out of its veins, or that sludge would clot and block off the Party's revolutionary vigor.

In a sharp and persistent struggle that began before the 1977 split with the Mensheviks and has continued down to today in a non-

antagonistic but still intense form, the Party has fought all tendencies toward complacency and forged forward with its revolutionary line. The creation of the weekly *Revolutionary Worker*; the understanding of the centrality of revolutionary agitation and the break with economism (i.e. the tendency to reduce the working-class struggle to a fight over wages, working conditions, etc.); the call for Revolutionary May Day; in fact even the chance to seize the time in the '80s for revolution and not throw it away—are all the fruit of this continuing struggle.

But even before the 1977 split, the tradition of the RCP and the RU has always been one of consistent struggle over line. Had it not been for that foundation, the Party would not have been able to stand firm at the crucial test.

Roots of the RCP

The Revolutionary Union was founded in 1968, amid the tremendous revolutionary upsurge in this country and the Cultural Revolution in China. At this point, many recognized, at least in word, the need for a revolutionary party based in the working class. This required no simple process of paper resolutions, but a struggle to integrate Marxism-Leninism with the concrete conditions of the U.S.—in the context of the world situation.

But in doing that, two lines inevitably arose. Within the RU a group concentrated around Bruce Franklin, a petty-bourgeois intellectual, developed a line that revolution in the U.S. would take the form of guerilla warfare concentrated in the ghettos. The task of revolutionaries, particularly white revolutionaries, they claimed, was to help this imaginary war by carrying out acts of terrorism.

The obvious wrong-headedness of this line today was not so clear at the time, and many honest revolutionaries were sucked into it. Why? Because winning the working class to political consciousness turned out to be an arduous and protracted task indeed, and the Black liberation struggle still seemed at high tide. The Franklin line was ultimately a defeatist one, giving up on the proletariat and retreating from mobilizing the masses. And when this terrorism failed, as it inevitably did, most of its champions sunk into the crassest open reformism.

Comrade Avakian led the revolutionaries in the RU to defeat the Franklin line of "revolutionary adventurism" and move forward to deepen the RU's understanding of fusing Marxism with the working class. This was done not only in opposition to the Franklin trend but also to social-pacifism (socialism in words but the most cowardly capitulationism before the enemy's force in deeds) that arose in opposition to it, particularly among other political forces such as the forerunners of the CPML.

The importance of this struggle was not so much that the RU upheld the working class, but that it also deepened its understanding of the need to bring *revolutionary* politics to it, one early fruit of this struggle being

the RU's revival of May Day as a revolutionary working-class holiday in the early '70s.

As a result of the practical advances following the Franklin line struggle, including the growing influence of the RU on many forces turning to Marxism, new challenges arose. By the fall of 1973 the RU leadership assessed that the time had come to sum up the struggles of the '60s and the attempts of the revolutionaries to fuse Marxism with the working class, and to build a party based on the correct line and programme flowing from that. To hold back would result in the loss of another generation of revolutionaries who would lack the organization that could sustain, lead and guide their work in the demanding periods ahead.

But again, because things stood at a key juncture, two opposing lines developed and crystallized into two camps.

The Bundists, made up of a few people in the RU and the leadership of two organizations that had been closely united with it (the Black Workers Congress and the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization) opposed the advance to the Party, arguing instead that they needed to win more people of the oppressed nationalities to *their* organizations first. They further asserted that Marxism had to be watered down to do that—combined with nationalism—or else the masses of oppressed nationality workers could not be won to it. Finally, as the struggle developed, they ended up arguing that the key struggle for Black and other minority workers was *not* proletarian revolution. Instead they twisted reality to pretend that the key was a fight for an independent state in the Black Belt South (an area of roughly 1/3 Black population in parts of Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia and Louisiana). While the class conscious proletariat upholds this right to a separate state, it does not favor it under present conditions and this fight is not the heart of the struggle.

The RU, again led by Comrade Avakian, showed that this line amounted to giving up on winning the working class to take up the fight against all oppression, including national oppression, and reduced the Black struggle itself to a bourgeois-democratic revolution. By trying to water down Marxism to supposedly make it more palatable, these opportunists exposed their real lack of faith in the ability of *all* workers to grasp the historic mission of the working class.

At the same time, the RU also fought a trend headquartered by the October League (now the Communist Party, M-L) and the *Guardian* newspaper—and echoed in its own ranks by those who later developed into the Mensheviks—to sever the revolutionary tie between the working-class struggle and Black liberation movement from another end. This line promoted economic struggle only for the working class, and tailed after bourgeois leadership in the liberation movement.

The RU upheld the revolutionary thrust of the struggle of the oppressed nationalities, while insisting that because of the proletarian

character of those nationalities, the struggle could only be resolved by proletarian revolution. Further, the RU intensified the fight to win the working class to take up these struggles in countless concrete cases.

The great advance of this struggle was to break with the long-held revisionist line among communists that the way to revolution was to organize various sections of the masses as special interest groups with their own little bourgeois-democratic demands and reforms, and instead to uphold and develop an approach of, yes, uniting with the forward thrust of various movements, while fighting to divert them to an overall revolutionary movement. Without this struggle the formation of the RCP a year later in 1975, and the successful carrying through of later line struggles, is inconceivable.

Class of the Future, Party of the Future

The battle to form the Revolutionary Communist Party—and having formed it, to maintain, defend and develop its revolutionary line—has been a crucial one for the working class. Had the proletariat lost at any point, there would today be *no* party to lead the working class and masses into the storms of the 1980s, where the real prospect of a revolutionary situation exists. Instead, those who came forward would find themselves struggling for their bearings and cursing the revolutionaries of the previous generation for squandering the lessons that had been paid for in blood.

Instead, today there is a revolutionary Party that can and will lead the masses forward to meet the challenges and take advantage of the great opportunities ahead. The Revolutionary Communist Party now turns full face to the future, together with the class-conscious workers and revolutionary-minded people of all strata. The struggles that have gone before have been a prelude—crucial, but a prelude just the same to the historic deeds waiting to be done and the even more intense struggles just over the horizon.

A Call to Battle, A Challenge to Dare



In a situation which is developing as rapidly as today's, the actions taken by the advanced section of the proletariat are of decisive importance. They will in no small part determine how far along we are and whether we are able to break through all the way when the conditions fully ripen and the opportunity for revolution is there to seize. These moments, particularly in a country such as this, are rare in history and their outcome has a profound influence on history for years, even decades, to come. Those who do understand what is going on and choose not to act are contributing to the prolonging of this destructive and decadent rule of imperialism. This programme is a declaration of war, and at the same time a call to action and a battle plan for destroying the old and creating the new. It must be taken up.

Today the words of Mao Tsetung ring out with full force:

**"Seize the Day,
Seize the Hour."**

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